

the  
**DANGEROUS  
TRUTH**

about how to write  
copy that sells



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Special thanks goes out to all the people who took time out of their busy work days to tell me exactly what they want in a copywriting tutorial - namely, how to write persuasive copy that sells.

*You asked for it, you got it!*

**Enjoy this exclusive peek at what goes on inside the minds of the most sought-after copywriters as they build world empires with words.**

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copywriting and marketing for print media and the web



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# WARNING.

The following expose is not for the faint of heart, the mealy-mouthed, the gutless or the Pollyanna Pushovers of this world.

If you grapple with daily guilt over **charging your clients the full price you deserve** for your services... do not read this.

If you forever bow down to "some other expert" despite **your decades of experience**... click the little X in the top right-hand corner and go do something else.

If you think that **persuasive copy** may as well be a dirty word, and don't want to learn how to use it to **pull more sales for your clients** and **command higher fees** for your copy writing services...

then please, don't waste your precious time here.

# NO HOLDS BARRED.

This manual is not about "**headlines that get read**" or "**how to write a good call to action**." You won't find a "**list of energizing verbs**" or "**no-fail subhead formula**" in this packet (although these things are no doubt important and I'll be giving you said practical tips elsewhere).

**This is a down-and-dirty, no-holds barred manual on how to write copy that sells, and do it from your emotional gut instinct.**

The techniques described here may shock you. You may not want to believe that "those nice people I met in the chat room" would actually have sneaky tricks up their sleeves meant to brainwash everyone who visits their websites and pauses over their goods and services.

But the naked truth is: man has been psychologically manipulating his fellow planet dwellers since the dawn of time. Your mom did it as a way to get you to eat your broccoli when you were five. Your high school girlfriend messed with yo' mind all the time... am I right? John Lennon sang about it and we all nodded because we surely knew what he meant about "playing those mind games."

**Advertising is nothing more than head games that people play every day.** You must accept this before you'll can ever begin to write persuasive copy that

gets results (let alone do it in your sleep like the world's highest paid copywriters do every day).

Before I deliver the eye-popping, jaw dropping truth about your marketing peers and their secret motivations and success tactics... please accept some words of comfort about the situation. **Take all the manipulation talk with a grain of salt.** Always remember that YOU were born FREE. Nobody, not the greatest marketer in the Universe, can force you into making a purchase unless you bow to his will, and you know that. We all know it.

Yet, bazillions of savvy sellers are putting millions into their pockets while emptying yours slowly, because they know how to give a good sales pitch... and maybe you don't? (Yet.)

But you soon WILL turn it around for yourself... assuming you have the stomach for selling. I mean, REALLY selling.

So, get with the copywriting and marketing program, dive headfirst into the collective mind of the best advertisers in the history of the world, and **finally reap the rewards of copy that sells.**

Bottom line: **if you're serious** about running a profitable business, on the Web or elsewhere: **you WILL master these psychological tactics and use them in your advertising copy every single day.**

And you won't feel bad or guilty about it, because **puffery and manipulation is the very nature of advertising.**

The **dangerous truth about writing persuasive copy** is here.

Memorize it, master it... use it if you dare!

Your Partner in Copywriting Success,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dina". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail.

Dina Giolitto  
Head Copy Chick  
<http://Wordfeeder.com>

# STARTING AT THE END: Big Brand Awareness.

Did you ever stop to think about WHY you insist on putting Hellman's Mayonnaise in your potato salad, as opposed to the No-Frills brand?

Did you ever consider that Allegra might not be any better than the generic allergy medication found on the shelves of your neighborhood drug store?

Did you ever wonder how you got roped into upgrading the security system on your computer several times a year... or who in fact PROVED that it was in fact more economical to buy a Japanese car?

There is a reason why your home is stuffed to maximum capacity with brand name items, and why you place your utter faith as a consumer in what massive corporations have to say about life and how you should live it.

**It's all due to the power of branding and the impact of persuasive copywriting.**

When you open your garage, your closet, your medicine cabinet, your office door or your kitchen pantry, what do you see? Let me guess: you see rows and rows of name brands... Honda, Toro, Polo, Liz Claiborne, Berbery, Longaberger, Miracle Gro, Bayer, Tylenol, Oral-B, HealthTex, Fisher-Price, Hewlett-Packard, E-Machines, Coke, Minute Maid, Farberware, Maytag... the list goes on forever! And all those names represent the END result of powerful marketing in action. Brand name products on your shelf. And you really believe in those brands, don't you? They have you. There's trust there. That trust was built over YEARS of strong branding and persuasive copywriting. Believe it!

Now if you yourself own a business, you're struggling to establish your own brand. Maybe you're even developing a small following... it's coming, slowly. But at some point, maybe now, maybe a year from now, sales will have capped off and you'll be asking yourself:

**How do I get more people to buy from me?**

How to take this marketing thing up a notch and then step into the realm of Big Brand Awareness? (the one that means making REAL money at what you do and not just "supplemental income" a.k.a. pocket change).

***How will you become a household brand on the internet?***

Let's talk about the web. Just like there are major corporate brands, there are "major players" on the internet - folks who have built up their presence and can now call the shots that the rest of us follow. You know who I mean. The ones

who dictate which software you should buy, which books you should read, what "the right way" to write articles is, which seminars are "must attend" events, what networks to join and what your website should look like.

Are these guys really any better than you? Are they somehow more deserving of success than you are? Are their ideas more intelligent?

Why am I even bringing this up?

I'm bringing this up to show how crowds of people follow leaders. If you want to make more money, you've got to become a leader. Leadership starts with communication, and in advertising, that's copywriting.

If you want to become highly successful, then you've got to emulate those who are already standing where you want to be.

Like you, **I wanted to know the secret to selling success.** I wanted to nail down the EXACT manner in which the Experts spoke to their audiences and how they managed to exert that magnetic pull. So I did some snooping around. I looked between the lines. I did it for over a decade, in fact... and I'm still peeking and poking, watching and learning.

What I found in EVERY CASE, was that there are some **very basic copywriting strategies at play.** Some of these techniques can be credited to the advertising masters. Some I took the liberty of nicknaming myself, here in this lesson. But one thing's for certain: **all of them are used by pro copywriters to sell products who do it as easy as breathing.**

**Are you ready for the goods?** Okay, let's do this.

# THE DANGEROUS TRUTH: Six Psychological Tactics Behind Copy That Sells.

## 1. The Fear Factor.

Would an advertiser really try to *scare* people into buying things?

You bet he would. Fear-based advertising has been around since before there was even advertising. The Bible is a form of fear-based advertising, I think!

(Am I going to hell for saying that?)

Try to name one company who isn't trying to scare you about something, so you'll buy their product as "protection" or "assurance."

*You could get into a car accident and end up paying thousands in damage!*

(Buy insurance from us and you can stop worrying).

*Your kids are in danger of being approached by internet predators!*

(Keep them safe with our content-blocking and monitoring software.)

*The environment can give you cancer!*

(Purchase these vitamins and live a longer, healthier life.)

Fear-based advertising works especially well in the web marketing world, where there is so much confusion about how things work. Everyone fussing over "the right" way to go about creating and managing a business online. Everyone running scared that they'll peeve the search engines and have their site cast into the pits of Cyber Hades, never to be seen in a list of search results again.

Web marketers make money on their information products precisely *because* they know they can prey upon the ignorance and confusion of their readers. Allow me to present to you a case scenario that demonstrates the persuasive power of fear-based advertising in action.

Enter the enterprising young man with internet connections, let's call him Bob for all intents and purposes. Bob's a go-getter making a name for himself in the

world of online marketing. He has plenty to say about web content and how to go about publishing it. People listen to Bob; Bob's been around the internet block a few times. Bob gets respect.

Curiously, Bob chooses to spend a significant amount of time on sites inhabited by *females*. If you type Bob's full name into a Google search box (in quotes of course), you can view pages and pages of *women's* forums, with his good name plastered all over the discussion boards. Within these forums, Bob makes himself available to answer questions and position himself as The Expert, as gaggles of girls glean all they can from him about how to profit from publishing content on the web.

After several months of wooing the women of the web, Bob makes his move - the big product launch. There is an accompanying sales pitch, of course. Let us examine the sales pitch to learn what kind of sounds Bob, a.k.a. the Rooster, makes while visiting the Hen House.

In his sales pitch, Bob the marketing star makes a lot of warning squawks about web content, and the potential Do's and Don'ts of publishing it. This is done to create a sense of fear in his readers. Fear of the unknown, a barrage of "Whatifs" to spook them out about the articles they were putting out there into global circulation. Fear of the legal forebodings attached to the content they might be picking up.

Someone could sue you out of house and home, all because you published articles for free on the Web. What other atrocities could befall you, from doing a simple thing like writing and publishing some Web content? God only knows... and oh yeah, this guy Bob, the Star Marketer, he knows too (because he IS God in a way, to these women?).

And that's when the Big Switch comes, smack in the middle of his product sales letter. Bob changes his tune from Chicken Little "Sky is Falling" to "I'm the guy who can rescue you from yourself and the danger of publishing your own content... if you would only GET THE MISSING INFO YOU NEED.

(And that missing info, is, come on, say it with me... *Bob's Information Product*.)

And this works. Bob makes a ton of cash in just the short week that he aggressively promotes his Content Publishing Expose.

Why does it work? Well, because just like your friendly neighborhood mechanic, Bob is very good at preying upon the worrisome nature of the world's females.

Believe it!

So, that's the Fear Factor at play in your copywriting. And now you're probably wondering, how does this relate to me and my product offering? The time has come to delve deep into the psyche of your prototypical customer.

What's your target audience's biggest fear (as related to the product you plan to sell them)?

Can you tap that, ruffle some feathers, get a fear fever brewing, and then present your product as the Light at the end of the Fear Tunnel?

I'm not saying this is right, or that it's necessarily your style to frighten people into purchasing things. I'm simply saying that psychological fear tactics **FREQUENTLY** result in people making fear-based purchases. This trick is as old as the day is long. And if you didn't fall for the Fear Factor just as easily as the next guy, you probably wouldn't have health insurance, or place so much faith in lawyers. Insurance companies and attorneys have been preying on our susceptibility to Fear of the Unknown for so long that we're barely aware of the condition.

So, that's the advertising Fear Factor in a nutshell. Fear sells and it always has. Use it... but beware the repercussions of being too careless with your fright-inducing strategy! For more information about that, buy my book, *The Only Thing to Fear in Advertising... is Fear Itself*. Just kidding. It's worth mentioning that there's a fine line between creating light discomfort in your readers and scaring the bejeezus out of them. People who go too far with the fear building method usually get labeled as "alarmist nutcases." So if you plan to generate income via fear messages, tread carefully.

## 2. Information Withholding.

*"It's not a lie if you told the truth but left out part of the story... is it?"*

Every single pro marketer pitches their product by telling only "half" the story. YES... EVERY one!

Is this ethical? Well... probably not. But advertising is a sleazy profession. If you're being totally, whole-picture honest and objective in your marketing, you're not really marketing. You're just spreading information. No wonder you aren't making any sales.

Practice speaking in half-truths if you really want people to buy what you have.

No, really. I'm sorry if this makes you feel uncomfortable. You are just going to have to grow a thicker skin, and do as I say. Think about it, when was the last

time someone who was trying to sell you something sat you down and told you the real deal? (I'm betting on "never.")

No company rep would email you a note that said, "*Oh, our product actually sucks, but don't tell anybody, okay?*" (although if that ever happened I'd laugh my butt off).

There's no apology on your can of Coke for all the artificial ingredients in your cola, right?

Your mechanic doesn't put a sign up on his garage that says "Oil changes, \$32.99... but you can get one for \$16.99 down the road..." does he?

I mean come on, it's *advertising*.

Here's an example of classic information withholding. Bazillions of fine, upstanding SEO companies readily make the claim that...

*"If pay money for our site submission service, we'll have you at the top of Google in no time flat!"*

And that may well be true. But what that search engine marketer won't divulge is that **you can get your web site out in front of targeted eyes all by yourself. It can be done using a slew of tactics that are 100% free of charge and very simple to learn.**

Truth be told, you're hard-pressed to find a search engine submission expert talking about free content distribution methods in the same breath as the one he takes to push his site submission service on you.

But one day, you might see him don a cap of a different color. He might just start talking out of the other side of his mouth. At another time, in a parallel marketing universe, of course. And that parallel marketing universe could shift as soon as... tomorrow.

He could very well say to you, out of the blue:

*"Attend our low-cost teleseminar, and learn how to search engine market your website on a budget."*

And then after you hand over the money he'll pass you a pile of secrets on the call. And people will be perfectly aware that this event transpired, and they'll look forward to more teleseminars in the future. But then on the day he goes back to his old song and dance about search engine submission services... they'll pay up for that one, too. And isn't that the dickens!

The moral of this story: Search Engine Guy is able to get away with talking out of both sides of his mouth. The reason is because he never tells both of his stories (the one about search engine submissions and the other about the teleseminar), at the same time.

Am I making sense here? To sum it up, *only share certain bits of information at certain times.*

Other examples of information withholding:

If you were selling lawn and garden chemicals, would it make sense to put out a free information packet detailing organic gardening methods?

The "whole story" might be that there are environmentally-friendlier options than spraying harmful pesticides all over your plants and trees. But the Lawn Doctor won't admit that! So yes, old Green Thumb just might be withholding a few facts as a way to simplify your buying decision for you.

If your website pitched home computer security systems, would you include a list of the millions of freeware and shareware sites offering identical protection for free?

Well, that IS the whole story... but you wouldn't tell it if you wanted readers to actually buy something. This goes for any industry. Even YOURS.

When you're trying to sell something, whether it be a product, a service, or even just an action that you'd like your reader to take, beware of Information Overwhelm. Tell your reader too much, and suddenly their eyes are glossing over. So you omit the excess, and you slant the remark in your favor. And you get people to do what you want (namely, buy your product).

Bottom line: marketers who want to make money selling their products don't give away the whole information enchilada. Ever! And it's not like the facts aren't Out There for you to read and consider. It's just that smart marketers aren't about to hand them to you on a silver platter. If they did... how would they ever keep their businesses alive? Really, think about it the next time you'd like to educate your readers on an important issue while simultaneously furthering your own goal.

### **3. Us and Them.**

There are baaad people out there. Scoundrels, louses, hijackers, charlatans, spammers, losers, heartbreakers, love-takers and people who are ready to steal your soul, stuff it into a Hefty Cinch Sack and take it to Mexico to be sold on the black soul market.

But we are not those people. Nope... we are on the Us team-- the good guys; the honest; the just; the well-meaning and good-intentioned. The Evil Others are an invisible force of shortcut-taking, dirty-trick-having, loathsome individuals, and we don't want to associate with their kind.

They are invisible because... well, we don't know who they are.

At some point in your life, you've met someone who you considered to be on the "Them" Team, am I right? But then you had a chat and got to know said individual a bit better. Suddenly, they changed sides and moved from Them to Us status. Unbelievable! Next thing you knew, you were rallying this person up to incite fear and loathing in another stereotyped group of People You Hopefully Will Never Meet.

We do this in our marketing, but we don't ever mention names. We only allude to Them with a kind of warning drumbeat. We're playing marketing Cops and Robbers in our minds. The good shall prevail.

In advertising, what types of groups would give us cause to label them as our enemies? The kind that engage in practices which go against what our company or brand stands for. Of course!

If you're a copywriter, maybe you have a beef against people who sell Instant Website Copy Kits. (Does anyone really sell that? I hope not - it sounds like a dreadful product).

If you're an article marketer, maybe you spend your days preaching against Private Label Content salesmen. Icky poo! Private Label Content is EEVIL.

If you're in the oil business, maybe you want to voice your concerns over the danger of electric cars.

Here's how we feel about our business competition. If we don't agree with their methods, then they must be defeated. Our mission: make their unsavoriness known to our allies while building a case for our own offerings. This particular psychological tactic has enough potential to provide years upon years of steady ad campaign and web content creation. It works well in the PR world, too. No kidding!

Suppose you sell homemade, all-natural prepared foods. By default, this would make your Natural Enemy anyone who offers convenience-based, artificial food products. Enter the "Us and Them" mentality. Any amount of your published content can be based around a "pro natural foods," "anti artificial ingredients" argument in the name of rallying the troops.

Or let's say you sell educational products - books, CD-ROMs and such. Your purpose is to enhance the homeschooling experience. Thus, if you want to pull your readers closer to your cause and your company, you can always take a few jabs at the Evil Axis of public education.

Apply this to your own niche market.

Who might you label the Arch Enemy of everything you stand for?

How many ways can you paint a picture of all the ways they're wrong and you're right, while rewarding your followers for playing on the Good Team?

Think of the endless fodder for ezine and blog content living here in Us and Them concept!

Regardless of what your chief product might consist of, the "Good Guys vs. Bad Guys" copywriting storyline serves multiple purposes. It does a wonderful job of recruiting future customers by inciting passion and fervor. And it also energizes existing customers into taking action on behalf of your firm. This is how marketing evangelists are born!

Stir up some Team Spirit and soon your audience of loyalists is primed not only to purchase but to spread the word about your company and all its virtue, wonder and glory! Additionally, people who catch your Us and Them fever make the absolute best product affiliates. Put some fire in the bellies of your fans and loyalists and you're suited up for world domination!

Us = Good.  
Them = Bad.

Live it. Love it. Use it to cement your professional associations and sell more product.

## 4. The Guilt Trip.

Ahh, guilt. While "Us and Them" works its psychology on your rabble-rousing fans, the guilt trip wins over the meeker individuals in your audience. If you've already been doing your best to attract a readership of humble, gentle, forgiving, confidence-lacking or even downright wussy individuals, the guilt trip will no doubt be your ticket to plentiful sales conversions.

(An aside: I don't mean to come across as callous when I whisper these little tricks in your ear with tongue planted firmly in cheek. I'm merely speaking the unspoken. These are the games real people play, and the way to get past them is to just laugh it off. Keep a healthy perspective! Life is absurd, humans are a curious lot indeed. But as a psychologically-minded copywriter, I for one can't ignore the manipulation. Pro copywriters stockpile an arsenal of secret word weapons to clasp their readers ever closer to their hearts and ultimately bring more profit. You have to just accept it, analyze it, learn how to use it to your advantage. Just don't forget to stay genuine in your "real" life experiences. There is a fine line between manufactured image you cultivate in your marketing, and who you really are as a person.)

Thinking about guilt trips in your marketing copy, I'm reminded of an email I once received from a well-known marketer which I think I shall never forget. In the email, this man was selling one of those Become a Marketer Overnight kit-in-a-box deals. His copy said something like, "*I'm sure it's not your fault if you haven't had time to sign up yet.*"

I nearly burst out laughing when I read that. "You're sure it's not my **FAULT**?" Whew... subtle guilt-tripping at its finest! On the outside, this guy seems really swell, right? What a generous offer... telling his readers "it's not your fault" if you haven't signed up yet.

It's not your fault.

It's not *your* fault.

Wait a minute, wait a minute. Why is the word **fault** in this sentence? The remark is aimed at you. *Are you at fault?* Did you do something wrong? No... you always do the right thing... don't you? What's the right thing? Oh dear, oh dear... maybe the right thing is to sign up for this shindig right now. Right?? Right?

(classic neurotic psychological response to the "It's not your fault" line)

Just seeing the phrase "*It's not your fault*" in print like that begs for a guilt-hungry self-blamer to breeze by, take note of the message, feel terrible about not signing up, and then click BUY NOW. If it wasn't true and this trick didn't work, why was it in the sales copy of one of the biggest marketing success stories out there?

Since I'm already deep in the throes of copy psychology here-- let's break it down further.

*"It's not your fault if you haven't had time to sign up yet."*

This one line - this ONE powerful line, not only guilt trips you out, but it paints a visual of you signing up. As though this was your eventual intention all the while. A lot of people would readily fall prey to that kind of pressure. It's hypnotic suggestive imagery, with a heavy helping of good ol' fashioned "do the right thing" guilt thrown in. Reminds me of Mom and her coercive broccoli tactics. Yes, millions of folks can be cajoled into buying things simply by having a little shame and suggestion stirred up and gently kicked in their general direction.

And me personally? Do I guilt-trip my readers? Well... no, and I think it's a personality thing. To me, it seems like the person who would guilt her readers into buying something is the same type who might deliver a backhanded compliment. You know what I mean: the old, "Oh your hair looks much better like this!" style of remark. (Oh - so you're saying it didn't look good before? Chance "much better" to "really nice" and you've got a genuine compliment with no sneaky underlying meaning lurking beneath the surface. Are you getting how subtlety can slip through the cracks in your copy?)

Me, I'd try every other trick in this mini advertising book, before I ever resorted to the guilt trip in my copy. Guilt tripping is just not my personal style. But if YOU want to use it, know that when the guilt button is depressed ever so lightly, it works on the minds of many target markets. The trick to using guilt in your copy is to position your product as an alleviator of said deep-seated guilt. Why would you feel guilty? Same as any of us would... life is tough, we feel pressured! We do and say the wrong things, we neglect our civic duties, we don't treat people as well as we should, we don't treat ourselves as well as we should... and then it eats away at us. That's a primo selling opportunity. *Buy your way to a guilt-free existence!*

Here's an extreme example. Suppose you own a company that provides home care for the elderly. How would you market your services and tap into the hidden guilt? Try some guilt-addled imagery. Let's say we're trying to reach the reader who's neglected to deal with Granny's needs in a timely manner. Grandma's world is crumbling as life sails on, and it's weighing on this person like a ton of bricks.

Would painting a sorrowful picture of Grandma with her failing health, and the gnawing fear for her personal safety, conjure up some feelings of shame and self-criticism in the reader? You bet it might. Oh, but what if your copy then told your audience that they don't have to feel badly anymore, because Grandma will be in good hands thanks to this professional health and personal care service?

Grandmother will be tended to with love, by people who truly care, and you can be free of worry. And guilt. Think that'd prompt some people to purchase, or at the very least endear your brand closer to their hearts, for next time? Yes, yes, and YES.

As with all of the Deadly Six Copywriting Truths, you've got to keep it subtle. You definitely don't want to come down hard on your readers while you're guilt-tripping them, as this makes readers angry. And you **MUST** sound sincere and understanding (as opposed to satirical, like the tone I've taken in this copywriting report). Tone is a big factor as to whether your copy will deliver the psychological effect you intend for it to have. If you have trouble with the tone, play that "advertising announcer" tape in your head while reading your copy out loud. Trust me, it works - I've been doing it since I was just a small tot, writing advertising jingles and radio commercials with my best pal, for fun. (What can I say? I was a weird kid).

## 5. Everybody's Doing It.

This one is a biggie. It's also the "safest" of all the sneaky psychological copywriting strategies, I think. Everybody's doing it, hey, sounds good to me! I want to do it, too. So... what are we doing, again?

I have witnessed countless advertisers create a huge buildup for all sorts of paid products by applying the old "Everybody's doing it" principle. I'm sure you have as well. Go read any one of the millions of sales letters circulating the web right now and you'll see what I mean. Notice the carefully crafted copy. Observe the way it paints a vivid picture of everyone in the universe shelling out dollars and smiles and kudos for the product in question.

An example. Let's flash back to a highly effective and long-running advertising campaign from the past. Remember the Sunkist TV commercials of the '80s? Scantly-clad, tanned beauties with perfect bodies cavorting on the beach... heaving a giant cooler onto the sand... drenching each other with ice-cold, thirst-quenching orange goodness. Dude, EVERYBODY was drinking Sunkist and partying down. Everybody was doing it! You could do it too... easy.

So next time you found yourself in the soda-and-chips aisle at Shoprite, you couldn't resist lugging a few liters of Sunkist off the shelf and into your cart. 'Cause, you know, that's what the cool people drink... and you might even imagine being one of them as you guzzle your bottle of bright orange sweet stuff and fantasize about what it must feel like to look smoking hot in a string bikini. (Keep drinking the orange soda... you'll be slithering into that swimsuit in no time!) ;)

Now I realize that the Sunkist commercials used mostly images to send the "everybody's doing it message. Here, we're discussing copy. As a copywriter, you can paint pictures with words and achieve the same effect. I just did it in the previous few paragraphs. Go back and read again to see what I mean.

Most of today's it-marketers manage to slip in at least a couple of choice lines indicating that folks are falling all over themselves to get what they've got going on.

*"All of our friends at [Amazingmarketing.com](http://Amazingmarketing.com) have been clamoring to know more about our new breakthrough product, Never Work Another Day in Your Life Again."*

*"I can't believe how many positive responses we've received already!"*

*"Hurry! Spots are filling up fast but there's still time to order before the price doubles..."*

Have you ever read a promotional sales letter on the web and thought, "Oh wow, that sounds fun and entertaining... I want to do what those people are doing!" I know I have.

The list of testimonials at the bottom of a sales page, or even in video format, exemplify the "Everybody's Doing It" quite nicely. Testimonials toot your horn for you, AND the more you have, the more you create that bandwagon effect. How many times have you clicked BUY NOW on a product page after scanning 10 to 25 endorsements from real customers who swore up and down that this thing changed their lives?

Okay, so I don't need to spend eight more pages convincing you that testimonials supply the needed "everybody's doing it" effect. It's worth mentioning here that everybody's doing it is pretty much a mandatory psychological copywriting tactic. You can't afford to NOT use this one. "Everybody's doing it" is a state of mind you definitely want to cultivate if you plan to start attracting business in abundance.

So now the question remains: how are you going to get testimonials if nobody knows about the book you wrote/CD you burned/cake you baked/whatever?

The solution: give away several copies of your product for free in exchange for testimonials. Call this your beta test-run. Tell your colleagues up front that you'd love a product review/critique from them, and that you can offer them a free copy of your product AND free exposure on your sales page, in exchange for their feedback.

Use this opportunity to take your beta test market's feedback into serious consideration, and make changes to the product as necessary. Then, send out your new and improved copies of the product and take stock of who liked which parts best and why. And if the testimonials aren't up to snuff? Make a few edits, then just send a courtesy copy for approval and you're all set up for that "Everybody's doing it" vibe on your site.

Here's the interesting thing about "everybody's doing it." By cultivating this impression with your audience, it actually will begin to manifest itself. Before long, everybody and his mom really will be doing it, and the word about your offerings will spread like wildfire. This happens very easily and naturally on the internet, reason being of course that wireless communication is the perfect viral marketing medium. So DO put the Everybody's Doing It copywriting psychology in place, as it's a winner through and through, AND it's the Least Sleazy of any of the Scary Six.

## 6. The God Complex.

Let's talk about billion dollar industries. Healthcare. Insurance. Law. Technology. *Politics*. Oh, and since we're calling this section the God Complex, we can't leave out the world's religious leaders.

How did the biggest revenue-generators of our time become that way?

Is it because they really do possess the ability to prolong our lives, erase our debt, free our souls and keep us safe from the evil and disaster that lurks around every corner?

Doubtful.

*Communication* is the secret weapon that burrows into our suggestible minds and works to brainwash the masses. Communication is how the Corporate Giants manage to keep on taking our money and feeding us half-truths that shape how we live our lives. Do you want to be the sheep, or the Shepherd? The shepherd calls the shots and makes the money. Being the Shepherd starts with how you communicate. Last night I watched the movie *Thank You for Smoking*. Have you seen it? If you need reinforcement to back what I'm saying in this e-book, rent that film. It hit home for me in every way.

So, the God Complex in your copy. What's that about?

When it comes to mind games and manipulation, the Industry Giants of our time are the biggest offenders of all. They have to be. Why? Power comes with authority and authority is nothing more than an attitude. This goes back to childhood, yours and mine. Who was the most popular kid in the schoolyard when you were growing up? Did that kid know more than the rest? Was he smarter? Wiser? Was he born with some kind of mystical power that commanded attention and demanded respect from the other children?

Well, yes. Yes, he was born with a mystical power - *the power to communicate*.

Just like that leader on your school playground, corporate dogs are big talkers. Convey authority in your marketing copy and you're instantly in control.

Lawyers, doctors, psychologists, religious leaders and more recently, technology experts "play God" to their target audiences. They ignore or dispute acknowledge common sense-based buying decisions. They reward the unquestioning follower. They lay down the law by the very tone of their voices!

*It's all just games, smoke and mirrors.*

When you're behind the scenes crafting the marketing message like I am, it becomes even more apparent that we're all out here just weaving our yarns, trying to sound like we know what we're talking about. But the mystery of life shall always remain just that: a mystery. And this is precisely the reason WHY the world's authorities are able to wield power over the herd. We can't prove them right... but we can't prove them wrong, either. Powerful communicators are busy behind the scenes, working every minute to cultivate a brand, an attitude, a position, an impression.

Giving credit where it's due: of course, doctors, lawyers, scientists, computer programmers, psychologists and religious leaders have each played a role to enhance our quality of living. And that's because power, when coupled with intellectual progress, is a momentous thing.

When you build up your Voice to the point that it begins drawing throngs of followers, that's when real control happens. That's when you become \*God\* to your customers. Likewise, major corporations define your relationship with them by the powerful words they communicate to you in ALL of their marketing and communication. These words leave an indelible impression in your mind and bind you to them for life. Who are Your Companies? Who are you willing to bet your money on, literally? Pfizer? Procter and Gamble? Microsoft? Hewlett-Packard? Target? Prada? Don't think this is an accident or coincidence. Big Company mentality and speaking manner is very purposeful indeed.

One of the most effective ways to keep readers groping in the dark while playing the role of Savior, Hand Holder, or God if you will, is to incorporate jargon into your copywritten materials. By jargon, I mean confusing language, buzzwords, or industry-exclusive terminology.

Let's use the tech industry as an example. Now there's a sketchy lot who's always trying to confuse us!

How many technology experts allude to "highly complex processes" that impact your return on investment. A lot, right? Pretty much all of them. But then, when do these same marketers ever reveal how simple it actually is to use their technology methods?

*When was the last time you asked a high-profile tech expert to explain a technique in simple terms, and actually got a useful answer?*

Smart users have clued in to the fact that they need only shell out minimal dollars for access to existing software platforms that they can easily manage themselves. But even with this information freely available, countless other consumers prefer to remain in the dark about technology. The majority of computer users would rather stare like a deer in headlights at mesmerizing

terminology than resolve to break it down into a practical process, learn something and save themselves a few thousand dollars.

Relating this to marketing: think about your run-of-the-mill technology copy and why it works so well to glorify the industry.

Everyone claims to offer "cutting-edge solutions" and the "innovative edge that will put you leagues ahead of your competition." The real power behind these words is that they're vague and pretentious-sounding, yet completely lacking in substantial proof. Buzzwords have the effect of making the reader feel like he's lost in an unfamiliar land where everyone speaks in secret code and no one's letting him in on the joke. It's an uneasy feeling to say the least. So when crafty marketers finally throw the unenlightened masses a bone, let's say, it's a tipoff about computer security or something, the snippet of info gets lapped up greedily in the quest for deeper understanding.

Jargon is such a delightfully tricky thing, it's no wonder the most powerful people in the world use it so plentifully. Jargon does two jobs. It's words that sounds important, yet remain in a state of utter vague meaninglessness. The meaninglessness serves a purpose of course: Make no concrete claims, and you have nothing to be held accountable for later.

Don't believe me about jargon? Take a look at the latest sales letter published by your favorite web marker and scan the copy for real promises of tangible, quantifiable results. Look for a definitive statement like this:

*"I promise you will make at LEAST \$10,000 in seven days, or I'll refund your money, no questions asked."*

Sorry, but no marketer in his right mind would EVER put such a quantifiable statement in writing!

As if being vague didn't already do the job, web copywriters insert confusing legal disclaimers for good measure. Refer to the sales letter from the last paragraph; scroll to the bottom, what's it say in the fine print? Examine the words closely. Understand their purpose. What is the point, can you venture a guess?

The sole purpose of the legal copy in any ad (think of the legal mumbo jumbo they spew at the end of every drug commercial), is to shoot down each one of the implied advertising statements made in the original ad copy. Is it me, or is that just one big joke on the public?

As the consumer, how would you ever be able to prove that a company didn't live up to its promises without going through major painstaking detail rehashing and spending millions on lawyers (who, incidentally, would win the court case using the same exact strategies that the copywriters use to sell the product in the first

place)? You wouldn't! The cleverly crafted, jargon-rich copy makes sure of that. It's all part of the very mysterious, non-specific, self-righteous way that people talk when playing God in their advertising. Use it or lose it!

## Okay, Copywriters, Let's Get Real.

The last "psychological tactic" that great copywriters use to sell products, is actually not a tactic at all. Before I reveal to you what it is... it's worth mentioning again that I've been exaggerating throughout this entire expose for the sake of making a point.

You asked me the question, "What's the secret to writing persuasive copy that sells?"... and I answered in the most straightforward way that I know possible. This is a fiercely competitive business. There is no room for pussyfooting and tippy-toeing in the world of marketing and brand building!

**If you can't write copy that sells, you don't get hired back.** It's as simple as that.

I meant it when I said there are hidden motivations swimming beneath the surface of every piece of marketing communication that does its job effectively. But unfortunately, in pointing this out, I'm making the majority of advertisers out to be a bunch of dishonest jerks, when in fact that's not the case at all.

It's supposed to be \*understood\* that advertising is biased. While many companies share industry news with their readers, people should assume that because it's a company trying to push their own brand (as opposed to a neutral outside party), that news will likely be the kind that's favorable to/supportive of the advertiser's agenda. Anyone who tried to sell something by supporting an opposing cause would be, well, not so great of a seller.

(And I think people forget that fact of advertising, placing a little TOO MUCH faith in the brands they grew up with.)

Advertising professionals, despite the Herculean selling tasks they undertake every day, are in fact real people with heart and soul just like you and me. They have families to love, nurture and support. They have friends to share the best and worst times with. They have disappointments to overcome, personal victories to celebrate, goals and dreams to strive for. And most importantly, advertisers (at least the best ones) are blessed with the gifts of deep empathy and love for their fellow humans and all the earth's creatures. It's this gift of being highly sensitive that makes them able to write persuasive copy with ease! (Is that ironic, or what?)

Most people who are truly blessed with killer copywriting and marketing skills also happen to be very kind, gentle and creative individuals. So, while all this phony talk, hoodwinkery and tomfoolery is needed because it's "just part of the biz," the schmooze factor of advertising sometimes wears thin on the consciences of the good people who write the copy behind the scenes.

(I know, because I'm one of them and I have lived through it for over a decade of tailoring messages that build corporate brands).

Taking all this into consideration: The last, and possibly most important strategy behind copywriting that sells, is to work hard at getting your customers to like you. The best way to achieve that is... surprise... *be genuine in your interpersonal communication, and BE YOURSELF.*

(Notice I said *in your personal communication*. It's not the same as an ad or website or brochure.)

I've laid out some downright conniving methods throughout this packet - but now I want you to know that these tactics only work best when you're addressing THE PUBLIC. People intuitively understand that a web page, sales letter, article, or brochure is not addressing them PERSONALLY. Thus, they can forgive all the things copywriters say to butter them up. They can look past all the advertising-speak. The marketing world embraces a canned language all its own, that we've all grown to recognize and accept. You KNOW when something is an ad, and when it's an informative article. If you don't, either the piece is poorly written or someone needs a crash course in Reality 101.

So, people tolerate advertising messages with no problem. But I'll tell you what they WON'T stand for. They won't tolerate being snowed with advertisey messages by so-called "friends" in their own email boxes. It's simply not right to take the sneakiest copywriting tricks in the book and then try to use them on people who you're communicating one-on-one with via email or on the phone. These folks are supposed to be your allies, remember. The customer is always right. He is to be revered and respected when the two of you are alone together.

So when you have the opportunity to be "face to face" with your customers - say, in networking forums or one-to-one in private communication...

**Please don't forget to be real.**

Be yourself. Be honest. Be authentic. Be a human.

There are places where you're allowed and even encouraged to be yourself in your copy.

Be yourself in many of your blog posts.

Be yourself in many of your ezine mailings (except the parts where you're advertising).  
Be yourself on public forums.  
Be yourself when you talk privately with your fans, clients and colleagues.  
Be yourself when you teach your students - for example, in a lesson like the one you're reading now.

Reach out and touch your unique readers one by one, in a *positive* way... and don't just do it once, but many, many times. Because just like real relationships in your life, it takes many encounters and exchanges before your customers learn to like you and want to buy from you.

(And if you're REALLY cool - some of your customers may even grow to \*love\* you! ;))

Simply being "on the level"-- a comrade, helper, teacher and commiserator to your customers and colleagues actually goes a long, long way toward building trust-based loyalty and future buyers of your products and services.

It goes farther than any snake-oil strategy like the ones I outlined above.

You asked me how to write copy that sells, and I told you the answer, to the best of my knowledge.

I hope that you're able to use it to a positive end for your own business.

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